



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:

1 DEC 1998

CERM-S (11-2a)

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDERS/DIRECTORS, USACE COMMANDS AND  
HQUSACE STAFF PRINCIPALS

SUBJECT: USACE Sponsored Conferences/Meetings/Workshops

1. The Chief of Staff of the Army directed all Commanders to take aggressive steps to reduce non-training TDY costs. He also mandated that we scrutinize all expenditures linked to travel and reduce these costs. Consistent with that guidance, I intend to reduce the number of conferences and the number of attendees at each conference, to combine conferences where possible to avoid additional travel, and to make maximum use of technology for video conferencing (VTC).
2. I have recently reviewed our costs associated with projected conferences and find that we are going the **wrong way!** We are having entirely too many conferences and must change the way we conduct our business to conserve financial resources for mission essential activities. Salami slicing and making marginal adjustments to old ways of doing business no longer works and is not consistent with taking care of our customers.
3. Accordingly, I am issuing the following guidelines for conferences requiring more than 25 Department of Army (DA) personnel in a TDY status. There are two major categories of USACE sponsored conferences: (1) Standard Recurring Approved Conferences (See Enclosure), and (2) Special Meetings. The Deputy Commanding General will approve special meetings on an as needed basis.
4. The criteria for Special Meetings are:
  - a. Special Meetings must support our vision and major goals. Examples: strategic planning forums and MSC conferences designed to improve customer/partner relationships, or to build interregional problem solving coalitions, or to formulate initiatives that address Key Success Factor (KSF) gaps, etc.
  - b. Special Meetings must have a specific mission purpose and you must be able to clearly articulate what will be lost if we do not have the conference. Recurring Conferences (annual, biennial, odd-years only) will no longer be accepted as "Special Meetings."
  - c. Special Meetings must be the only way to achieve the stated objective. There must be no other way to achieve the needed result, e.g., VTC, web-based conferencing, etc.

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d. Special Meetings will keep to an absolute minimum the number of personnel who must travel. Get back to the philosophy of "training the trainer" rather than everyone at once. For example, use small working groups of functional area chiefs from the Headquarters, MSC(s), and districts to resolve specific issues, conduct workshops, etc. The participants will be expected to appropriately inform, train, etc., their subordinates and others through e-mail, small meetings or VTCs.

5. ER 37-1-18, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sponsored Meetings will be revised to incorporate this guidance. I expect all Commanders, Directors and Separate Office Chiefs to follow both the letter and spirit of this guidance. Look for innovative ways to use technology and change mindsets to revolutionize effectiveness as we accomplish our mission.

Encl



JOE N. BALLARD  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Commanding

ENCLOSURE  
USACE Standard Recurring Approved Conferences

Senior Leaders Conference (with the associated Emerging Leaders Conference)  
Spring District Commanders Conference (with ENFORCE)  
Fall District Commanders Conference (in DC)  
\* Worldwide DPW Training Workshop (with ENFORCE)  
\* Project Delivery Team Conference<sup>1</sup>  
\* USACE Technical Transfer Conference<sup>2</sup>  
\* Navigation Conference (*PL95-269 & WRDA*)  
Small Business Conference (in DC)  
CP-18 Leadership Development Program

All USACE sponsored Conferences will have specific mission purposes, clearly written objectives, and After Action Reviews (AAR) to assess if objectives were met. Directors will include success in meeting conference/workshop objectives in appropriate senior leaders' performance evaluations.

\* The MP and CW managed Conferences will have a **total not to exceed 3200 mandays per year.**

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<sup>1</sup> The focus audience for this conference will be division chiefs at district, division and HQs, representing the disciplines that comprise the project team concept for cradle to grave project management. Intent is to facilitate the maturation of this project management concept, eliminate stovepipe mentality, and to engrain this concept into our organization culture. The focus of each year's conference would vary based on different phases of a project. While each conference would include representation from all the disciplines comprising the project team, attendance would be weighted towards those disciplines supporting that conference's focus area. This strategy supports the "train the trainer" concept as only a fraction of the leadership involved with project management across districts and divisions will be able to attend each year. Annual scheduling provides the ability to establish continuity between conferences and over time to reach a greater percentage of Corps employees associated with the project management process.

<sup>2</sup> The conferences conducted within this framework will consist of a series of workshops that will have written objectives and specific mission purposes approved by the Director(s) of MP & CW. The number, size and type of workshops will vary each year, but the total number of mandays involved would remain relatively constant. The focus audience of the workshops would generally be below the branch chief level. Each workshop will focus on a particular discipline, with the purpose of disseminating information, receiving feedback, sharing lessons learned and best practices, and clarifying guidance to assure that critical policies, methods and resolutions of major issues are understood.